

“What The Church Should Be Like,” Part 3 - 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 – March 13th, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part three a series I've titled, "What The Church Should Be Like."
 - Up to this point, the Apostle Paul has been answering questions that the Corinthian Christians had written him a letter about.
 - From Paul's answers here in his first epistle, we can conclude that many of the questions were about the basics of the church.
- In chapter seven Paul answers their questions about marriage and the issues related to being single, divorced and widowed.
 - In chapter eight Paul answers their questions about meat offered to idols and the issues related to whether or not to eat from it.
 - In chapter nine Paul answers their questions about his rights as an apostle and how to run the race so as to receive the prize.
- In chapter ten Paul answers their questions about the freedom Christians have in Christ so long as it doesn't stumble anyone.
 - In chapter eleven Paul answers their questions about women's head coverings as well as what they were doing at communion.
 - In chapter twelve Paul answers their questions about the spiritual gifts, which they were apparently very uninformed about.
- In chapter thirteen Paul continues answering questions about the gifts, but shifts their focus to the most excellent way of love.
 - Here in chapter fourteen, Paul is answering their questions about both the church worship service and the church as a whole.
 - As we near the end of the chapter, Paul has turned a corner in order to address how and what it is that the church should be.
- 1. The Church should be a place where we worship God (Verses 21-25)**
- Paul says it's only the prophetic Word that causes people to fall down and worship God exclaiming, "God is really among you."
- 2. The Church should be a place where we're built up (Verses 26-29)**
- Here, Paul says when they come together as a church, everything they do must be done so that the church may be built up.
- 3. The Church should be a place where we're instructed and encouraged (Verses 30-32)**
- Paul continues by giving specific restrictions with tongues and prophecy so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.
- 4. The Church should be a place where we find peace and harmony (Verses 33-35)**
- v33 Paul tells them that God is not a God of disorder but of peace as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.
 - v34 He then says women should be silent in church and not allowed to speak, but be in submission as the law says.
 - v35 He says if they want to inquire they should ask their husbands at home, for it's a disgrace for women to speak in the church.
- This is one of those places in the Word of God where it's important to understand the scriptural why behind the cultural what.
 - By that I mean we need to know a little about the culture of Corinth back in that day in order to understand what is being said.
 - As such, I think it would be helpful to sort of paint the cultural canvass with a broad brush as it were, so as to better understand.
- First, the cultural norm in that day was to have the women seated on one side of the church and the men seated on the other.
 - The thought is that the early church adopted this seating arrangement because this is what they did in the Jewish synagogues.
 - As you might imagine, this created some logistical issues especially if and when the wife had a question about the teaching.
- It seems that when the woman would ask her husband a question from across the room, it caused a disruption and interruption.
 - It's for this reason that Paul tells them they are to remain silent in the church and basically forbids them to speak during church.
 - Instead, he instructs them to wait until they are at home to ask their questions, and that they are to ask this of their husbands.
- The question becomes one of why Paul would specifically say not only are they to ask at home but ask their own husbands.
 - The thought here is that the women were not only asking their husbands, but other men in the church, which was inappropriate.
 - This because, they would in effect be shaming and disgracing their husbands by asking another man about their questions.
- I'm of the belief that this is what Paul means when in verse thirty-five he says it's a disgrace for women to speak in the church.
 - There are two reasons I believe this, the first of which is because the word for speak in the original language can mean chatter.
 - This because the Greek word that Paul uses here, laleo, can also carry with it the idea of talking, questioning, or even arguing.
- The second reason I believe this is because prior Paul mentions that women can speak, pray and even prophecy in the church.
 - Back in chapter 11, Paul instructs women concerning covering their heads while they are praying or prophesying in the church.
 - In other words, it's not that women can't speak at church, rather, it's that women can't create problems or conflict in the church.
- 1 Timothy 2:9-14 --9 I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. 11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.
- I would suggest that for the women to be doing what they were doing in the church of Corinth was the source of much conflict.
 - If you were to ask me what I thought was one of Satan's most successful strategies in destroying a church, this would be one.
 - More specifically, that of creating confusion, chaos, and conflict within a church body so as to get Christians fighting each other.
- In closing, I'll simply say that which sadly, very few pastors can say, which is that I praise God for the harmony in this church.
 - However, it would be naïve to think the enemy isn't going to keep trying to bring conflict into our loving and peaceful church.
 - Because the enemy is a roaring lion I'll continue coveting prayer for the renovation of and provision for our new church building.